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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/15/2035
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECIN](#) [ASEAN](#) [APEC](#) [ARF](#) [XC](#) [XE](#) [XU](#)
SUBJECT: POSITIVE OFFICIAL REACTION, MUTED PRESS REACTION
TO SECRETARY'S SPEECH ON ASIA-PACIFIC MULTILATERALISM

REF: A. STATE 2965
[1](#)B. STATE 4128

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson for reasons
1.4 (B/D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: An MFA official responded positively to the Secretary's January 12 speech on Asian regional architecture, inviting further bilateral discussion on how best to build effective regional institutions. Stating that differences among Asian states made an EU-like structure untenable, our MFA interlocutor suggested the U.S. and the PRC work "step by step" to develop durable regional institutions. PRC media outlets offered limited reaction to the Secretary's speech, viewing it primarily through the lens of recent bilateral differences. END SUMMARY.

Positive Official Reaction -----

[1](#)2. (C) The PRC viewed the Secretary's January 12 speech positively and was interested in engaging with the United States in further discussion on Asian regional architecture, MFA Policy Planning Department International Situation Analysis Division Director Chen Yanjun told EmbOffs January [1](#)14. The PRC did not seek to push the United States out of Asia -- and did not have the capacity to do so even if it wanted -- but rather sought to deepen cooperation with the United States on developing strong regional structures. Chen added that cooperation channels already existed in APEC and other regional institutions that could potentially be expanded. Chen highlighted ASEAN plus one (ASEAN plus China) and ASEAN plus three (ASEAN plus China, Republic of Korea and Japan) as effective regional structures.

[1](#)3. (C) The PRC remained open to the eventual establishment of one comprehensive Asian regional structure, but Asia was not Europe, MFA's Chen said, noting that large disparities in economic development as well as cultural and historical differences made quick progress toward a European Union-like structure unrealistic. Instead, Chen suggested, the PRC and the United States should promote a gradual, step-by-step approach in the development of durable Asian regional structures.

Muted Media Reaction -----

[1](#)4. (U) PRC media commentary on the Secretary's January 12 speech was sparse. PRC media viewed the speech primarily through the prism of recent U.S.-PRC differences, with the nationalistic Huanqiu Shibao (circ 1.5 million), a newspaper sponsored by the Party daily, Renmin Ribao, commenting January 14 that "Asia has become America's diplomatic hornet's nest." (NOTE: This comment appears against the backdrop of recent PRC media criticism of U.S. arms sales to

Taiwan.) The Beijing Youth Daily January 14 highlighted the Secretary's statement that America's future is linked to the future of the Asia-Pacific; and the future of the Asia-Pacific depends on America. (Note: Embassy PAS sent more in-depth media analysis to EAP/PD January 14.)
HUNTSMAN